



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

February 2001

## Update: Pacific Northwest Water Quality Temperature Criteria Guidance

The process of developing of regional temperature criteria guidance for the Pacific Northwest waters is moving steadily ahead. In March, the states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington along with EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, are sponsoring three workshops (one in each state) to allow the public to preview the technical papers written for the project and provide early input on the criteria guidance while it's still being developed.

The box on the right gives the specific dates and locations of the workshops. We encourage you to attend one of the workshops to learn more about the project and learn how you can give us your input as we move forward.

### Project Status Report

To date, the work of the regional temperature criteria guidance project has been largely focused on pulling together and analyzing the most current and relevant scientific information related to water temperature and its effect on native salmonids of the Pacific Northwest.

A technical work group, made up of experts from the three states, Pacific Northwest tribes and federal agencies, has produced five Technical Issue Summaries covering key scientific aspects of water temperature and salmonids and an overall Synthesis Paper. The topics covered in the summaries are: physiological

### Public Workshops to Preview Technical Papers and Preliminary Options

#### Workshops - When and Where

Washington: March 12, 2001 - 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
*Washington Department of Ecology - Auditorium*  
*300 Desmond Drive*  
*Lacey, Washington 98503*  
*Open House: 12 - 1 p.m.*

Oregon: March 15, 2001 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
*Portland State University - Smith Memorial Center*  
*724 SW Harrison St*  
*Portland, Oregon 97201*

Idaho: March 16, 2001 - 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
*Idaho Dept. Of Environmental Quality -*  
*Conference Rooms C&D*  
*1410 N Hilton*  
*Boise, Idaho 83706*  
*Open House: 9 - 10 a.m.*

responses of salmonids to temperature, behavioral responses, the effects of multiple stressors on salmonids (for example, the effects of predators), the geographical distribution of salmonid species and the patterns of temperature fluctuations in the natural environment. These summaries, plus a Synthesis Paper lay the scientific foundation upon which the regional criteria

guidance will be built. A portion of each of the three workshops will be devoted to discussing the technical summaries.

The full, peer-reviewed text of the Technical Issue Summaries, as well as the overall Synthesis Paper, will be available by the end of February on EPA's website: [www.epa.gov/r10earth/water.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/water.htm)

Hard copies of the documents will be available at the workshops.

The technical workgroup is also in the preliminary stages of drafting options for the regional criteria guidance. These preliminary options will be presented and discussed at the workshop as well.

In addition to the technical work group's efforts to build a solid scientific foundation for the criteria guidance, a policy work group has also been laying important groundwork for the project by setting clear goals and establishing expected outcomes. This work group is made up of managers from the three states, the services, tribes and EPA. This group is primarily focusing on making the guidance practical and making sure it complies with the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and tribal trust responsibilities.

The overall goal of the project is for the states and tribes in the Pacific Northwest to use this guidance when developing their temperature standards. Ultimately, if the states and tribes adopt the regional criteria guidance as water quality standards, EPA Region 10 will approve those standards as meeting the Clean Water Act and will be able to conduct a streamlined Endangered Species Act consultation for their standards. States and tribes, however, will still be able to adopt a temperature standard different than the regional criteria guidance, but they will have to demonstrate it meets the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act.

## Project Schedule

After the public workshops, the participants will begin an intensive process of further developing and evaluating potential options for the regional criteria guidance. We expect to have a draft criteria guidance proposal available for public review and comment by mid-summer 2001. Formal public hearings and a comment period will be held at that time. After consideration and response to public comments, the final guidance will be issued in October 2001.

## Project Background

Cold, clean water is critical to the protection of threatened and endangered salmon, steelhead, bull trout and cutthroat trout (salmonids). These fish need cold water throughout their various life stages and appropriate water temperature is a critical part of their habitat. Temperature in rivers and streams varies with the seasons, over the course of 24 hours and over the length of a river. A water quality standard for temperature is key to ensuring rivers and streams are cold enough to support these fish.

In 1996, Oregon revised its water temperature standard and submitted it to EPA for approval. EPA approved Oregon's standard in 1999, but during the review process concerns were raised by the National Marine Fisheries Service and others that the standard would not fully protect all life stages of threatened and endangered salmonids. To address these concerns, EPA Region 10 started a project to develop regional temperature criteria guidance that would be protective of salmonids.

This project is unique because it is a collaborative process between states, tribes and federal agencies. The guidance will supplement the national water quality criteria for temperature to meet the specific needs of salmonids in Northwest streams and rivers.

## Who Can You Call?

For additional questions you can contact:  
**EPA staff:** Dru Keenan, 206-553-1219, E-mail: [keenan.dru@epa.gov](mailto:keenan.dru@epa.gov).  
John Palmer, 206-553-6521, E-mail: [palmer.john@epa.gov](mailto:palmer.john@epa.gov).



# Meeting Notice

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## Pacific Northwest Water Quality Temperature Criteria Guidance

Please attend the Washington public open house and workshop to discuss the Temperature Criteria Guidance

**Purpose:** Learn more about the project and how to get involved  
Preview technical papers and preliminary options  
Provide early input on the criteria guidance

**When:** March 12, 2001  
Open House                      noon – 1 PM  
Workshop                        1 – 4 PM

**Where:** Washington Department of Ecology  
300 Desmond Drive  
Lacey, WA 98503

**For more information on this event contact Ann Butler at 360-407-6480 or email [anbu461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:anbu461@ecy.wa.gov)**

*Ecology is an equal opportunity agency. If you have special accommodation needs, please call Donna Lynch at (360) 407-7529 (Voice) or (306) 407-6006 (TDD). Email may be sent to [dlyn461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:dlyn461@ecy.wa.gov)*

# ***Public Open House and Workshop on Temperature Criteria Guidance***



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